

## E. Rochester and Hilton schools join Urban-Suburban program

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The East Rochester and Hilton school boards approved joining the Urban- Suburban program Tuesday night, capping perhaps the busiest fourmonth period in its 50-year history.From the mid-1960s until 2014, only one new school district joined the six early adopters. The past months, however, have seen four new districts, with East Rochester and Hilton joining East Irondequoit andSpencerport.Hilton expects to add between eight and 12 students a year in first and second grade. East Rochester would start with 15 next year and build up to about 50 in four years, according to its website.

Votes in both districts were unanimous, as they were in East Irondequoitand Spencerport.Urban-Suburban advocates have taken the opportunity of the program's 50th anniversary to promote its attributes to other districts. Besides increasing diversity in the suburbs and providing opportunities for deserving Rochester students, itlets suburban districts prop up sagging enrollment and keep up their full course offerings.

Eleven of Monroe County's 17 suburban districts now participate, and Webster is considering joining in 2016-17. The other districts that don't participate are Churchville- Chili, Gates Chili, Greece, Honeoye Falls-Lima and Rush-Henrietta.

In Hilton, Superintendent David Dimbleby said having opportunities for his students to study in Rochester was an important component. That option may become available when the Urban-Suburban mission statementgets rewritten this year.

The program is also expected to change its position on white students. They cannot participate now, but they could be under proposed changes to add socioeconomic diversity as a program priority. White students' exclusion was one of the points that enflamed some Spencerport residents during a lengthy debate there.

About 600 minority Rochester students now participate in Urban-Suburban through a competitive application process. Many more students apply but are denied.

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